1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

though many middle-aged men accompany the expeditions and always have their share in inter-tribal fighting and local disputes.

The age-set system of a tribe is in no way its military organization. Men fight by villages and by tribal sections and not by sets. The war companies are local units and not age-set units, and within a company men of different sets fight side by side, though, especially in raids, most of the warriors would be members of the two most junior sets. Kinship and local ties determine a man's place in the ranks. Hence the age-sets are not regiments, though wars and raids are often spoken of as the actions of a certain set because they took place during the initiation period of this set and its members took the most prominent part in them, since skill in arms, love of adventure, and desire for booty are the privileges of youth.

It is in more general social relations, chiefly of a domestic and kinship order, and not in political relations that behaviour is specifically determined by the positions of persons in age-set structure. When a boy passes into the grade of manhood his domestic duties and privileges are radically altered. His change of status is epitomized in the taboo on milking which comes into force on the day of his initiation and continues for the rest of his life, but it is expressed also in other domestic tasks, in habits of eating, and so forth. At initiation a youth receives from his father or uncle a spear and becomes a warrior. He is also given an ox, from which he takes an ox-name, and becomes a herdsman. From now on, till he is a husband and father, his chief interests are dancing and love-making. Then he becomes 'a true man': 'he has fought in war and not run away; he has duelled with his age-mates; he has cultivated his gardens; he has married a wife'.

There is a sudden and great change in status from boyhood to manhood, but the modes of behaviour which differentiate these two grades do not distinguish one set from another, for the privileges of manhood are enjoyed by members of all the sets equally. Nevertheless, the sets are stratified by seniority and there are well-defined relationships between them. Before summarizing these patterns of inter-set behaviour we touch on some general characteristics of the whole system.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

handed man that his left hand is his right hand. It is the quality of leftness, not the thing that is left, the hand itself, which is significant for them. Similarly, the left half of the severed carcass of a sacrificial animal is not intrinsically evil. It is always eaten by someone. It is bad symbolically, not in itself, and symbolically only in certain contexts or for certain people.

It is suggested that the spear as a projection of the right hand symbolizes the vitality of man, the manhood of man with the associations of lineage values that go with it. It is within the logic of the representation that we speak only of men. The spear stands for masculinity. Women do not bear fighting-spears. The spear does not go with femininity. Hence also boys do not bear fighting-spears till at their initiation to manhood they are given them by their fathers. Before this event they are something in between men and women, and this is shown by the fact that they milk the cows, a feminine task that men may not undertake. That neither women nor boys bear spears means that they do not go to war and also that they do not sacrifice. It is not just that a woman may not slaughter the sacrificial victim —it is not, in any case, important who slaughters it—but that, not being able to bear the spear, she cannot make the sacrificial invocation, which is made by the spear in the right hand as well as by the mouth. She can indeed address Spirit at sacrifices, but if she does so she prays (*pal*); she does not invocate (*lam*). This is understandable when we think of the spear as an extension of the right hand and hence as representing strength, masculinity, and goodness. Sacrifice, like war, belongs to that side of life, what we ourselves call the spear-side.[1]

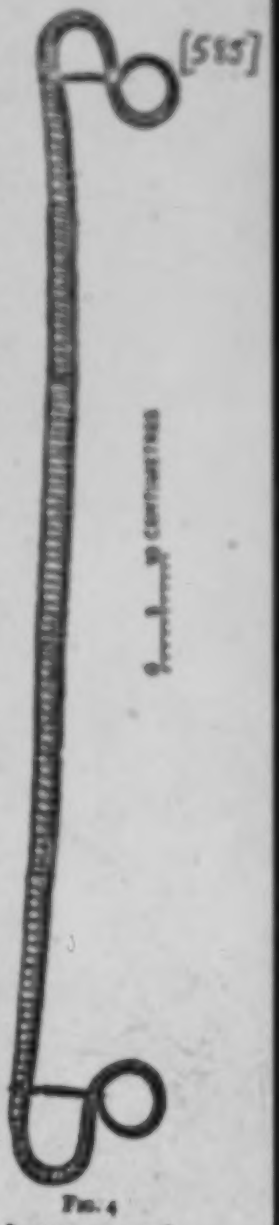

FIG. 4
Instrument used in wedding invocations

[1] I was told that a wife may act as master of ceremonies in her husband's place and shout out the spear-name of his clan at a wedding. This is the *twoc ghok* mentioned later.